

SPAIN AND THE CHRISTIAN FRONT †

UBI CRUX IBI PATRIA



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THE timid Catholic is always tempted to make terms with the anti-Catholic culture in which he lives and to endorse enthusiastically the verdict of his non-Catholic friends on every point which has not been authoritatively defined by the Church. The Spanish Church had a bad press in this country and it is not *de fide* to endorse the manifesto of the Spanish hierarchy. Thousands of Spanish priests have been murdered but it is not heretical to say, "Serve them right. They were on the side of reaction." Yes, it's easy to sell the past, troublesome to discover the true facts, and uncomfortable to defend an unpopular cause. All the more amazing that Catholics as a whole have come out of this test so well. The advantage of belonging to a society which is not only supernatural but universal, has never been more apparent. It is only a minority of Catholics who have failed to rise above the provincialism which never understands the implications of that great saying, *Ubi Crux Ibi Patria*.

If Catholics do not defend the Spanish Church who will? Every Catholic teacher in universities and schools who takes the trouble to master the main facts about this war and to talk formally or informally to his (or her) pupils can help to armor our Catholics

The Main Events Leading Up to the War

The King abdicated in 1931 after the Municipal elections which gave him an 80 per cent *majority*. But this majority was in the country and the minority was concentrated in the towns. The King could easily have declared a dictatorship but this might have involved bloodshed, and the King preferred to leave. The abdication was hailed with joy by liberals in England and in the United States who persist in regarding Spanish liberals as high-souled idealists. But the first year of the new régime was ruinous. Here are quotations from three Spanish liberals who had helped to bring the new régime into power: "This is not it. The Republic has a sad and bitter profile" (José Ortega y Gasset, professor at Madrid). "The Republic fails by the incompetence, laziness and vanity of its rulers" (Eduardo Ortega y Gasset, leader of the Radical Socialist Left). And Professor Valdecasas of Granada, referred to the new rulers as men "who rival each other in the task of destruction . . . consternation will spread when the country learns the value of the cattle that have been destroyed, the trees that have been cut down, the setback suffered by agriculture, the paralyzation of credit and the annihilation of wealth."

The Spanish people who—dare I say it?—know more about Spain than American liberals, stood this for two years and then turned out the gang that were impoverishing Spain and returned a Right-Wing Centre Government. In 1934 Moscow instigated an armed

rebellion against the legal government of the day. "The First Soviet Republic in Spain" was set up in Asturias under that name and the currency circulated by the rebels was stamped with the Sickle and Hammer. The organ of the Communist International summed up the civil war in the Asturias in these words: "The workers of Asturias fought for Soviet power under the leadership of the Communists." Thus two years before a single Italian or German landed in Spain Russia had incited a rebellion against the Republican government and had landed, as Professor Peers proves, a consignment of seventy cases of arms in the Asturias.

Did American liberals who disapprove of the intervention of Italy in Spain register their disapproval of the intervention of Russia in 1934? Did those who are today protesting so loudly against the wickedness of rebellion against legal governments condemn those who had risen against the legal government in 1934? They did not. Radical opinion denounced the Government for suppressing the uprising and demonstrated its solidarity with the rebels. Reds (and pinks) have no objective standards. Their rule of faith is simple. Whatever the Right does is wrong. Whatever the Left does is right. True democracy consists not in counting noses but in counting Red noses.

This "Legal" Government

American liberals make capital out of the theory that the Valencia Government is the legal government

of Spain. The election which brought the Popular Front into power was illegal. The President was terrified by the threat of yet another Red uprising and dissolved the Cortes instead of calling upon the leader of the largest group to form a government. The election in many towns was held under a reign of terror. My father, Sir Henry Lunn, is a Methodist, a lifelong liberal and incidentally one of the few Englishmen to be honored by election as an honorary member of the Phi Beta Kappa. He happened to be in Cadiz on the day of the election. "I was left," he wrote to the *Times*, "with no illusions as to the methods under which that election was held."

Alcala-Zamora, one of the great radical architects of the Republic, idolized in his day by Anglo-Saxon radicals, has described (and surely he should know) the methods by which the Popular Front obtained its majority. The Popular Front, he tells us, "launched its attack by starting disorder in the streets, and using violence in its demand for power . . . the mob seized the balloting papers with the result that false returns were sent in from many places. . . . In certain Provinces where the opposition had been victorious, all the mandates were annulled and candidates who were friendly to the Popular Front, although they had been beaten, were proclaimed deputies." Now remember the man who makes these statements is not a monarchist and reactionary, but a radical who was President of the Spanish Republic at the time the elections were held.

In spite of terrorism, mob violence and false re-

turns the *Popular Front* obtained nearly half a million LESS votes than the parties of the Centre and Right.

The Red Terror

Spain provides a perfect illustration of the new tactics of Moscow. "We must build up Communism," declared Lenin, "with non-Communist hands." Communists must pose as the friends of peace and democracy while preparing for civil war and dictatorship.

In Spain the number of self-proclaimed Communists in the Cortes was small, a useful window-dressing point which has deceived innocent and ill-informed Liberals in my country and in the United States. "The trick by which they (The Communist Party) do not appear in the Government with any greater preponderance than before is too naïve to deceive anyone." Thus the *Vanguardia* (Barcelona). In September, 1933, a meeting in Madrid of the representatives of the Socialists and Communists announced that both parties would only be satisfied with a Marxist régime.

Caballero, recently premier of Spain, has never described himself as a Communist but he sent this telegram to Soviet Russia, "the proletariat of Spain will try to follow the example of your great country."

In October, 1934, Caballero, who has never officially joined the Communists, gave an interview to Mr. H. E. Knoblaugh, author of one of the most illuminative books on this war (*Correspondent in Spain*). "Lenin declared Spain would be the second Soviet Republic in Europe," said Caballero, "and Lenin's prophesy will

come true. I shall be the second Lenin." Caballero subsequently endorsed the interview in which this statement appeared. The new technique of Moscow is to wait until a Popular Front, of which Communists are the driving force, obtains power, and then by means of a Red terror to murder or to terrorize into submission the moderates. Lerroux, doyen of Spanish radicals, tells us that all the Radical Deputies in the province of Valencia were murdered and that in some villages every member of the Radical Party was exterminated. "The blood toll of the Radical Party is far greater than that taken of the Church."

"The victory of the proletariat," Lenin had declared,, "can only be achieved by rivers of blood." "Our Programme," wrote *Pravda*, September 9, 1928, "is an all-embracing and blood-soaked reality."

On June 16th, Gil Robles presented to the Cortes the balance sheet of "blood soaked reality." 1,287 people had been injured; 269 killed; 160 churches had been totally destroyed; 251 partially destroyed; 10 newspaper offices and 69 premises of political and other associations destroyed. These statements were not denied.

A British Vice Consul in Spain whose sympathies had been with the Left said to me, "I have a strong bias in favor of any Government which guarantees that I can walk from my 'digs' to my office without being murdered. A colleague of mine was in Cadiz while a magnificent church was being burnt. 'Why don't you do something about this?' The policeman shrugged

his shoulders. 'We've instructions from the Government not to interfere.' "

If a Popular Front came into power in this country, and if, say, the offices of *The New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* were burnt and a few hundred republicans murdered, and if as a crowning outrage Senator Borah was murdered by G-men acting under the instructions of the Government, these good people who are so indignant with the Spaniards for not allowing a democratic Government to continue its program of murder, would be the first to scream for a Franco to save them.

It was the murder of Calvo Sotelo by the police which precipitated the Civil War. Franco rose only just in time to forestall a *coup d'état* designed to inaugurate a Red Dictatorship. The evidence for this is given in my book *Spanish Rehearsal*.

Democracy is not an issue in the Spain of today. "In a formal sense," writes the *Manchester Guardian*, "it is true that the rebellion started the Civil War, but in a real sense it is very uncertain what came first, revolution or rebellion."

It is a little naïve for Americans to write as if a rebellion against a legal government was necessarily a crime of the first magnitude for the United States owes its independence to such a revolution.

"Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while

evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." Every American will recognize this quotation from the "Declaration of Independence" and every fair-minded American who has taken the trouble to master the facts about the Spanish War will concede that the Spanish Nationalists had more justification for their revolt than had the Founders of the United States.

True and False Democracy

The great word "democracy" is too often used as if it were a magic incantation which dispenses those who use it from any further need to think. Many Liberals forget that a majority has no divine right to do what it pleases. Democracy can only exist in countries where there is a respect for minorities. The theory that a majority has a divine right to suppress all opposition and to condone or instigate the murder of its political opponents is nothing more than the divine right of Kings standing on its head.

"Our progress in degeneracy," said Abraham Lincoln, "appears to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that all men are created equal excepting Negroes. When the know-nothings get control, it will read all men are created equal except Negroes and

foreigners and Catholics. When it comes to this I shall prefer emigration to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia for instance where despotism can be taken pure without the base alloy of hypocrisy.”

During the Red terror “the practical interpretation of Spanish democracy,” as Mr. Arthur Bryant, the famous British historian, has pointed out, “involved the denial of liberty to all but Communists and Anarchists. In Red Spain today minorities have no rights, not even the right to exist.”

Franco's army is a democratic army for two reasons. First, because every class is represented in that army from Dukes to Dustmen. Secondly, because it enjoys the overwhelming support of the Spanish people. Castajón's miraculous march from Algeciras to Toledo would have been impossible had he not been welcomed as a deliverer in every town and village which he entered. I have motored for hundreds of miles along lonely mountain roads in a car flying the Nationalist colors. During the War in Ireland, no Black and Tan car could stir without military protection. Roads were mined and blocked by felled trees. I never felt in Spain that I had the least cause to be nervous. I saw nothing but friendly looks. I verified for myself the fact that Franco had no need to guard his lines of communication seeing that they were protected by the population. And if you doubt the accuracy of my impressions, ask any military expert whether it would be possible for Franco to hold, much

less to advance, from the hundreds of miles of Front which he controls with the forces at his disposal, if it was necessary to spare troops to guard lines of communication (thousands of miles in aggregate length) from a hostile population.

The Spanish Church

If American Catholics do not take the trouble to master the case for the Spanish Church, that case will go by default. The Church in Spain has been the target for a campaign of calumny unanchored to fact. The Church is accused of enjoying great wealth in the midst of poverty. The Church, on the contrary, has been the victim of a series of partial and complete confiscations in the years 1812, 1820, 1835, 1837, 1868 and 1931. These successive lootings enriched the looters but *not* the Spanish poor. "Everything has disappeared into thin air," exclaimed a speaker in the Cortes, after one of these spoliations, "the army has not been increased by one battalion, nor the navy by even a barge, nor has the lot of the proletariat been improved."

Charitable people gave and bequeathed money to the Church which was responsible for education, hospitals and other works of a charity on a world-wide scale. The Church administered economically the charities which it controlled. No heavy salaries were paid. Only a small proportion of the money bequeathed by charitable Spaniards to the Church was spent in supporting the overworked self-denying members of Religious Orders who administered these charities. A

trustee is not rich because he administers the estate of a millionaire. The Spanish clergy were the underpaid and overworked trustees of national charities. When the State seized the property of the Church she agreed to pay the stipends of the clergy. The Primate of Spain received the equivalent of about eight thousand dollars a year, a stipend far smaller than that of many of those who signed the Protestant Manifesto. Over three thousand priests received annual stipends of about one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five dollars a year and they were lucky if Mass offerings enabled them to double these starvation wages.

The Church is accused by ignorant people of doing nothing for education. People forget that Spain has been governed for a century by governments of which the majority have been liberal in complexion, that these so-called Liberal Governments while professing the most liberal sentiments have been liberal only with other people's money. They have talked a great deal about education and done very little. The Church has done a great deal, and has educated more than half of those who have received any education, and is blamed by those who did little because she did not do more than she did. And whose fault was that? The State progressively crippled the Church by stealing—there is no other word—from the Church, the money which charitable people had bequeathed for Church hospitals and for Church education.

“Backward as Spain has been in this respect (education),” writes Professor Peers, a distinguished Prot-

estant scholar, "it is hardly possible to imagine in what condition she would be were it not for the labors of the clergy, and in particular of the Religious Orders."

And here are two more quotations from the writings of this distinguished scholarly and well informed Protestant which I commend to the attention of those who share neither Professor Peers' respect for, nor Professor Peers' knowledge of, the Spanish Church:

"IF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS ARE DIS-TRUSTED IT IS NOT BY THE POOR, THE SICK OR THE HUNGRY."

"THE SPANISH CHURCH IS CREDITED BY ITS ENEMIES WITH BEING OVER POWERFUL AND OVER RICH. BUT ITS TRUE POWER AND ITS TRUE RICHES ARE OF THE KIND THAT NO MAN CAN TAKE FROM IT; THE MILLIONS WHO WORSHIP WITH AN INTENSITY AND REGULARITY HARD TO PARALLEL, AND THE THOUSANDS WHO LIVE SAINTLY LIVES OF DEVOTION."

Thousands of poor priests, who lived lives of austere poverty could have escaped cruel deaths by apostacy. In all Red Spain there have not been a dozen apostates. Mass is being offered daily in Madrid and Barcelona by hunted priests who pass in disguise from one cellar to another. The drama of the Elizabethan missionary priests is being reenacted on Spanish soil. Spain has her Champions in every town behind the Red lines and has enriched our Christian

heritage with stories as beautiful as those which have come down to us from the first century of the Church. Here is one such story told to me by the Catholic Bishop of Gibraltar. An old priest was being led out to be shot. His hands were bound. "Please cut these ropes," he said, "that I may bless you." A Communist took an axe and hacked off not only the ropes but his hands. And moving about his bleeding stumps he continued to bless his executioners until he died.

It is easy to defame the Church which produced men such as these from the security and material comfort of America, but there are some of us who would feel very proud to be Spaniards today, and who do feel very proud to belong to a Church against which the gates of Hell have not prevailed, a Church which gives men grace to face cruel deaths not only with courage but with radiant and infectious joy.

On Palm Sunday, 1937, I stood on a tower near Madrid and saw the churches in which the Red Lamp had been extinguished by the Red Fury, and I knew what Easter week would mean for the Catholics in Madrid, Catholics for whom every street would be a *Via Dolorosa*, and I thanked God for the fact that the Catholic pulse still beat in the arteries of Madrid. The manure of Communism has fertilized the stricken fields of Spain, but from that bloody soil has sprung the glorious flower of heroic Faith.

"Nothing Left to Persecute"

The *Manchester Guardian*, a consistent supporter of the Valencia Government, published an article in June, 1937, on the persecution of religion in Red Spain.

"The attack on religion has been more radical in loyalist Spain than anywhere else in the world, including even Mexico and Russia. All Roman Catholic churches have been closed down as places of worship, and nearly all have been completely destroyed. . . . Nor have the Protestant churches escaped. . . . The two Non-conformist places of worship at Clot and Puebla have been burnt . . . in loyalist Spain there is nothing left to persecute."

Our artless credulous victims of Red propaganda assure us that the Spaniard may be anti-clerical but that he is not anti-religious. "Anti-clericalism," writes Professor Peers, "is the mask which hides the anti-God face. If the Reds should win, the mask will surely and immediately be removed. . . . For that it is religion in every form known to them that the Reds are persecuting no one who has followed the history of Spain during the last few years can possibly doubt." The Spanish Reds are much amused by the ease with which English and American Protestants swallow their propaganda.

A Barcelona paper referred sardonically to the speech which Alvarez del Vayo made at the League of Nations promising "freedom of Religion." This speech was largely intended to impress British and American

Protestants. "This speech of Alvarez del Vayo," wrote *Solidaridad Obrera*, "with his kind of promise or compromise that Spain will reestablish the Catholic religion, may have sounded very well in the League of Nations. It appears to have given tone to the discussion; but here in Spain it makes us *smile*."

Was the Church in Spain the ally of reaction? Thousands of priests voted republican in 1931 and some were deluded enough to vote for the Popular Front in 1936. Broadly speaking it is true that Spanish Catholics did not vote for the parties of the Left. Why should they? The return of Leftist's parties to power in Spain has usually been followed by renewed attacks upon the property of the Church, and not infrequently signalized by outbreaks of church burning and priest murdering. Now priests have an odd reactionary bias against people who want to kill them and few institutions instruct their members to vote for parties which seek their destruction, but in so far as the Church has shown political bias that bias should be interpreted less as a bias in *favor* of conservatives than *against* these Leftists. And it is as foolish to criticize Spanish Catholics for voting against the Leftists as to attack Jews because the whole weight of International Jewry is thrown against Naziism.

Atrocities in Spain

It is important to realize the distinction between the crimes *proved* against and *admitted* by the Reds, and the charges *alleged* against the Nationalists.

I. Motive. Both Communists and Anarchists on the one side accept as a fundamental principle of the class war the liquidation by violence of certain classes. The Nationalists, on the other side, are not waging a class war. In the Nationalist Army every class is represented from dukes to peasants and proletarians. The Nationalists execute only men convicted of crimes such as murder. The Reds massacre men and women for the crime of wearing a collar and tie.

II. Scale. Even if we accepted all the Red charges as proved, there would still be this fantastic contrast of scale. Mr. Arthur Bryant, the well-known British historian, places the number of those who have been massacred in Red Spain at 350,000. Significant are the facts published by the *Manchester Guardian*, the greatest of the British provincial papers, and a supporter of the Valencia Government. The correspondent of this Liberal and Left-Wing paper informs us that official records exist of the murder of 35,000 people in Madrid in the first three months of the war. And he adds that the real figures cannot be less than 40,000. Llorente, the ex-secretary and bitter enemy of the Inquisition, estimates the number of those executed by the Spanish Inquisition in three centuries as 31,912. Lea, the Protestant historian, dismisses this estimate as based on "extravagant guesses," but if we accept this extravagant overestimate as correct we arrive at the astounding conclusion that the Inquisition in three centuries operating over the whole of Spain put to death fewer victims than the Reds (on the testimony of a paper

that supports them) in three months in the city of Madrid.

III. Type of Atrocity. The Nationalists are accused of shooting. The Reds have pleaded guilty to torture. The Nationalists have published several documented reports of Red atrocities. The Embassy of the Spanish Government in London issued a reply. The Embassy "has not denied nor denies now that there have been excesses in the repressive conduct of the Government forces. . . . The Spanish Embassy in London does not in fine contradict the rebel pamphlet."

The Red atrocities are therefore admitted fact. Read the first Burgos report which the Spanish Embassy does not contradict and you will find that it contains case after case of torture, soaking victims in petrol as a preliminary to burning them alive. You will find murder and torture of women and children. Nor do the Reds suffer from any invidious class distinction in their atrocities. In one case all the inmates in an asylum for aged paupers were killed with axes. It is not difficult for those who have been in close contact with the victims of those horrors to believe in "evil spirits wandering through the world for the ruin of souls."

I have analyzed in great detail the charges against the Nationalist troops in my book. The Badajoz myth has been exposed. The description of the massacre was signed by a well-known American correspondent, Reynolds Packard, who has since publicly protested that he was in Portugal at the time he was supposed to be

sending a telegram from Badajoz. Reputable correspondents who entered Badajoz with the Nationalist Army deny that the massacre took place.

As to Guernica, in the first place it should be noted that no American Liberals protested against the regular bombing of Nationalist towns such as Granada far away from the battle front, and that it is therefore difficult to see why there should be such an outcry about the bombing of Guernica which was on the very fringe of a battle and which was an important center for the making of munitions. The excitable story by the "Dean" of Valladolid would be more impressive if the ecclesiastical authorities at Valladolid admitted that this gentleman is the Dean. Nor is the case for his veracity improved by the fact that he is the author of another account of the bombardment appearing under another signature and confirming the story told by himself. The correspondents who entered Guernica shortly after it was captured agree that the main destruction was done by incendiaries. I have seen in Irun houses which were fired by the retreating anarchists. The walls were standing and the interiors were gutted. If a house is struck by a shell or by an air bomb, some or all of the walls collapse. The correspondents of the Havas Agency and of the *Times* have confirmed the fact that most of the damage which they witnessed on entering Guernica with Franco's army was done not by bombing but by deliberate destruction from the ground.

The Red atrocities were so terrible that nothing would have been less surprising than outbreaks of law-

less reprisals. Lynch law is not unknown even in the United States. Franco deserves to be congratulated on his immense success in curbing reprisals and on ensuring trial by court-martial to all Reds charged with crimes. Justice has been tempered with mercy.

"Some" Basques Not "The" Basques

I am often asked why did "The Catholic Basques" fight against Franco. My answer is that "the" Basques did not. "Some" Basques did. The majority of the Basques were with Franco from the first. Of the minority who fought against him, only a minority were genuine Catholics. The driving force behind the resistance of the schismatic Basque was provided by the extreme Leftists. Among the anti-Franco Basques there were, of course, some devout Catholics who subordinated the religious interests of Spain to Nationalism. Nor is this the first time in history that Catholics have subordinated the interests of the Church to the interests of their nation.

The United Christian Front

The authentic Christian instinctively aligns himself with Christians of other communions when they are attacked or persecuted by atheists. The Church in Spain has fallen among thieves. There are Protestants who are not content merely to pass by on the other side, like the Levite in the parable. They mutter "Serve you right" as they continue their self-satisfied journey. But there are also, thank God, Protestants who feel that the bond which unites them to Catholics is more

important than the differences which separate them. There are many old-fashioned Protestants who believe that even priests should be given a sporting chance to die in their beds, and that even Catholic churches should be saved from destruction.

Sir Henry Lunn, a lifelong Methodist and Liberal, moved at the Methodist Conference a resolution of sympathy for persecuted Christians in Russia, in Germany and in Spain. In the course of a letter to the *Times* he wrote as follows:

“Why should Christians today be less united in their detestation of persecution than they were in the time of the Russian persecution? Is it because they have been misled into accepting the myth of a military rising against a democratic Government? I know Spain well. I was in Cadiz on the day of the General Election, 1936, and was left with no illusions as to the methods under which that election was held. . . .

“For fifty years I have been actively associated with the movement for the Reunion of Christendom. We have never worked to reunite Protestants against Rome, but to unite all Christians in the war against anti-Christ. The Reunion Conference at Grindelwald in 1895 commissioned me to convey an address to the Pope in reply to the bull *Ad Anglos*. The address affirmed that ‘underlying all our differences there was a real unity.’ It was signed by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in England, the Chairman of the Baptist Union, Hugh Price Hughes, the Methodist leader, and notably by Dr. Farrar, subsequently Dean

of Canterbury. He would certainly never have anticipated that his successor at Canterbury would broadcast a plea for the Valencia Government from Madrid, when every Catholic church in that city had been closed by that Government.

"Since August 4, 1914, we have been sated with horrors and have lost that power of sympathy to which Robert Wilberforce appealed on behalf of the victims of the Slave Trade and Gladstone on behalf of a comparative handful of suffering Bulgarians. But now the world-wide campaign against Christians calls for united action by all Christian men. Meanwhile:

"The souls of them that have been slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held, cry with a loud voice, saying: 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?' "

To my Father's letter the Archbishop of Westminster replied in a letter which began as follows:

"Those who belong to the Catholic and Roman Church will have read with appreciation and respect Sir Henry Lunn's moving appeal in your columns for a united Christian Front against the world-wide anti-Christian onslaught. Pius XI explicitly appeals in his letter 'Divini Redemptoris' to all who believe in God. Between those who believe in Christ as true God and true man and worship Him there should be charity—an effort to draw nearer to Him and so nearer to one another. This means not only friendly relationship but mutual help in defending the civilization which is

founded on the truths enunciated in the Nicæan creed. Sir Henry rightly insists on this bond between us. Let us be frank. There have been in the past misunderstandings and faults of manner on both sides, and of temper or a lack of charity in controversy. These, our failings and differences, the enemies of religion have exploited. But the realization of a common peril is drawing Christians together in practical sympathy. In Germany prayers have been offered in Catholic churches for the persecuted Protestants, and in this country the Methodists have unanimously approved the resolution of sympathy for the persecuted Catholics in Spain. I thank them and Sir Henry Lunn with all my heart."

A group of leading Protestants has recently been formed to support the Church in Spain. Here are extracts from a letter from Captain Archibald Moule Ramsay, M.P. for South Midlothian:

Angus,
21st September, 1937.

CIVIL STRIFE IN SPAIN

UNITED CHRISTIAN FRONT COMMITTEE

DEAR SIR:

I have been requested to write to you as Chairman of the above-mentioned Committee, consisting exclusively of representatives of British churches.

This Committee has been formed in order to co-operate with the Roman Catholic Church with a view to presenting a United Christian Front against the Red Menace to Christianity: to deal with certain fallacies

which are diverting the natural sympathy of our countrymen from the victims of the present anti-Christian campaign in Spain—and to give practical expression of our sympathy with those victims.

The phrase “It is six of one and half a dozen of the other” has been a clever piece of Red propaganda, which has obscured the facts—and is not true in this case.

The statement that Protestant Churches have been suppressed in that territory is false. General Franco affirmed in a broadcast speech on 19th February, 1937, that he stands for freedom of conscience and religious toleration. He himself stated clearly to Sir Walter Maxwell Scott early in this year that under his rule Protestants should be assured complete freedom to practice their religion.

Further his official representative in London authorized me to write a categorical assurance in this sense to the *Times* in July giving as an instance the fact that the Protestant Church and Schools in Salamanca had recently been restored to Protestants since he had gained power in that city.

The Nationalists have produced substantial evidence to show that General Franco had absolute justification for believing that the Reds in the Government had planned a dictatorship of the Lenin-Trotsky type; and that his rising was just in time to avert that catastrophe.

Yours faithfully,

ARCHIBALD MOULE RAMSAY,

Chairman.

The following are the members of the Executive Committee:

The Earl of Dalhousie,

Lord Ruthven,

Lord Phillimore,

The Bishop of Brechin,

The Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway,

Sir Donald Cameron of Lochiel Kt.,

Sir Archibald Hurd,

Sir Henry S. Lunn,

The Very Rev. Cyril Alington, Dean of Durham;

J. B. Atkins, of the *Spectator and Guardian*;

The Rev. Canon Douglas, Southwark Cathedral;

The Rev. Dr. Hall, O.B.E., Missionary Secretary of the Church of Scotland;

The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Gregory, Editor of the *Methodist Times*;

The Rev. Canon Mozley, St. Paul's Cathedral;

The Rev. Dr. Rattenbury, President of the Free Church Council;

Angus Watson, Chairman, Congregational Union, 1935-1936;

Athelstan Riley, Seigneur de la Trinite, Jersey;

The Rev. Canon N. P. Williams, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Oxford;

The Rev. Dr. Workman, Secretary, Methodist Education Committee.

Is Franco Fighting for Capitalism?

If the Reds win, the old familiar process will begin again. The Red leaders will enrich themselves at the expense of the country and, in the words of Lerroux, twice Radical Premier of Republican Spain, will "pillage the Treasury of the Nation before seeking safety in flight."

If Franco wins there will be no place in the new Spain for the exploiter or the idle. The manifestos of both Carlists and Phalangists agree in their denunciations of the evils of finance-Capitalism. It is the reddest of red herrings to exploit the admitted grievances of the poor in the old Spain as an argument against Franco. During the last century Spain has been governed, again and again, by Liberal Governments who came into power with a mandate to redress these grievances, only to prove that Spanish Liberals are liberal with other people's money but that none of the loot reaches the lower classes.

Franco stands for social justice. "Do not expect us," he has said, "to defend the privileged classes. We shall govern in favor of the middle classes and the poor. The workers have nothing to fear from us."

Franco's social policy does not exist only on paper. He has been in control of the greater part of Spain for more than a year and has proved that he means to practice what he preaches. No employer can dismiss a workman without authorization from the "Provincial Delegate of Work" and an appeal is always permitted

to a "Tribunal of Work" consisting of three employers, three workmen and a magistrate. The Franco régime would be denounced as "Communistic" by most American business men.

The Testimony of the Spanish Radicals

Here is a decisive quotation from the writings of Alexander Lerroux, for fifty years an active Radical and Republican and several times Premier since the fall of the Monarchy.

"The Army has not broken with discipline. It seeks to restore a discipline broken by anti-patriotic traitors and criminal anarchists; it has not risen against the law but for the law, so that law and authority should rule not against the people but for the safety of the people. . . . When the Army took up arms it was already identified with the people; and the people without distinction of class or outlook, deliberately took its stand by the side of the Army."

Dr. Gregorio Marañón was one of the founders of the Republic. He served a term of imprisonment under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera at a time when Caballero was drawing a handsome income as Councillor of State. He is one of Europe's most distinguished medical scientists, President of the Academy of Medicine. And this is what he says: "I have been mistaken, I have been misled. From the standpoint of a scientist one should admit one's mistakes. The Revolution was brought about by us. We desired it and prepared it . . ." (He is alluding to the Revolution

which dethroned the King.) "At bottom only one thing matters: AND THAT IS THAT SPAIN, EUROPE, AND MANKIND SHOULD BE FREED FROM A SYSTEM OF BLOODSHED, AN INSTITUTION OF MURDER WHICH WE ACCUSE OURSELVES OF HAVING PREPARED WHILE LABORING UNDER A TRAGIC MISAPPREHENSION."

Catholic Teaching on the Right of Rebellion

The Protestant signatories to a recent manifesto cited Leo XIII's condemnation of rebellion against legitimate authority. It is strange that these learned signatories included no one familiar with Catholic teaching on this point. Authority ceases, as Leo XIII would have told them, to be legitimate when it condones crime.

"A tyrannical *régime*," writes St. Thomas Aquinas (S. Theol. II.II., Q.XLII. 2) "is never just, because it is ordained, not to the good of the people, but to that of the ruler himself. And, therefore, to disturb a *régime* of this kind is not sedition."

The Rev. Michael Cronin, M.A., P.P., in a standard Catholic treatise, *The Science of Ethics*, sums up the teaching of the Church on the right of rebellion as follows:

Resistance is lawful (1) when a Government has become substantially and habitually tyrannical, and that is when it has lost sight of the common good, and pursues its own selfish objects to the manifest detriment of the

subjects, especially where their religious interests are concerned.

The burning of churches, the persecution of religion and the massacre of political opponents satisfy this, the first condition for legitimate rebellion (2) *when all legal and pacific means have been tried in vain to recall the ruler to a sense of his duty.*

Calvo Sotelo returned day by day to the Cortes to plead for the restoration of law and order. It was his murder by the police that convinced the Nationalists that "legal and pacific means" were vain (3) *when there is a reasonable probability that resistance will be successful and not entail greater evils than it seeks to remove.*

Franco is certain to win. The tragedy of this war is infinitely less tragic than the evil of a Spain governed by militant atheists (4) *when the judgment formed as to the badness of the government, and the prudence of resistance thereto, is not the opinion only of private persons or a mere party, but is that of the larger and better portion of the people, so that it may morally be considered as the judgment of the community as a whole.*

The Popular Front came into power as a minority Government polling nearly half a million votes less than its opponents. "When the Army took up arms," writes Lerroux more than once *radical* premier of Spain, "it was already identified with the people and the people without distinction of class or outlook took its stand by the side of the Army."

* * * * *

"Six of One and Half a Dozen of the Other"

The four conditions which Catholic theologians lay down for just rebellion have been more than fulfilled.

"I cannot commend all that Franco has done," a Catholic friend of mine recently remarked to me. No, and Franco would, no doubt, have some difficulty in commending all that my friend has done. But the General and my friend will no doubt get to heaven, some day, for all that.

"There is a city," writes Mr. Belloc, "full as are all cities of the lame, the halt, the blind, the evil and the rest. But it is the City of God." And there is an army full, as are all armies, of violent men and sinners, but it is the army which is fighting for the City of God.

Incidentally the prospects of Catholicism outside Spain would be brighter if the passionate devotion to the Faith and the heroic self-sacrifice which is so common in Franco's army were equally common among Catholics who live in tranquil security.

There has been one war, and one only, from which an army has emerged with a completely clean sheet, the war in which the angelic hosts expelled Lucifer and his cohorts from heaven. And if we make it a condition of our sympathy that every action of every soldier in an army is to meet with our whole-hearted approval we shall have the satisfaction of complacently condemning all armies in all wars which are fought between human beings.

Of course we do not take this attitude where our own interests are involved (Spain is very far away). In a war between G-men and gangsters we are wholeheartedly on the side of the G-men. We do not murmur disapprovingly: "I can't take sides in this fight. At

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least two of the G-men have very odd private lives and they often wound innocent bystanders when they start shooting." The Church in Spain has fallen among thieves. Let Catholics, at least, refrain from imitating the Levite who passed by on the other side.

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